

the Pine Bluff Commercial on April 27. Two significant points were made.

First, it stated:

In many ways it seems that the only people who benefit from guaranteed minimum wage are those high school dropouts with lost ambition. We should not promote a permanent minimum wage mentality in anyone by convincing them that they can only expect an increase in wages if the government gives it to them. On the contrary, we should encourage them to look to their willingness to prepare themselves and use their ambition as their ticket to higher prices.

On another subject Mr. Collins talks about good educational programs like Trio being sooner or later: "Bush-wacked and slowly ground into government pork."

Without his knowing it, the opportunities afforded by Trio to students who want to try are being threatened by a new proposed program called Gear Up. The threatened dilution of Trio has been prophesied in this article. Mr. Collins' wisdom on each of these issues is remarkable.

[From the Pine Bluff Commercial, Apr. 27, 1999]

#### MINIMUM WAGE STIFLES GROWTH, CREATIVE SPIRIT

(By Leo Collins)

As long as I write an opinion column or do radio commentaries, which I have done 30 years or more, I will from time to time voice an opinion against those who buy into the minimum wage concept.

And I will also get branded from time to time as one of those black conservatives who doesn't want to see all Americans with enough financial resources to sit around the dinner table and feast on pheasant washed down with vintage wine.

Well, those who identify me as a black liberal half of the time are about right. Those who identify me as a black conservative the other half of the time are probably right also.

Some of our well-meant social programs are not much more than social crutches that are both addictive and non-productive and often do nothing more than provide feather bedding posh jobs for those charged with overseeing these types of programs.

But there are many government programs that do tons of good: Headstart, TRIO Programs (Talent Search, Student Support Service and Upward Bound) all come to mind. They help provide all kinds of educational supplements for students who are at a disadvantage or who are educationally abandoned.

We don't want to throw all social programs out the back door. Most government programs start off with all the good intent in the world, but along their voyage down the road of good intentions, these programs get bushwhacked, are slowly ground into government pork and get branded often as government waste.

There are times when our elected officials make political hash out of well-meaning social programs because they seem directed toward a certain racial or ethnic group. So when we evaluate the outcome of these types of programs, they will not have had a national impact on America; but they will have helped a large segment of the populace in certain areas of the country.

Over the years social programs that were designed to help the poor have always been

branded as pork. But Pentagon waste and aid to huge corporations have always been labeled as programs aiding America, or it's done under the guise of keeping America strong.

The concept of minimum wage has always sounded like a good idea. No American, according to those who advocate it, should earn less than a set wage.

All of this sounds good, but is it good? Not to me! It stifles individual growth, it dampens the creative spirit and it gives the illusion that your lifelong economic dreams have been fulfilled even though you can never quite figure out why you never seem to take enough pay home to make a down payment on a new car. In many ways it seems that the only people who benefit from guaranteed minimum wage are those high school dropouts with lost ambition.

In a small business the owners may not earn enough to pay minimum wage, but this is an ideal climate for young people to learn something about what it requires to make it in an economy based upon free enterprise. That is more important than earning minimum wage.

No, I don't believe in child labor and slave wages, but I do believe in organized labor, providing that labor leaders require the membership to deliver high quality performance after management concedes to their demands. Wage wise indeed, there ought to be some kind of collective bargaining, but it should be between workers and management, not necessarily between government and management.

The government only needs to raise its powerful fist when management is obviously abusing labor by not providing safe working places, health insurance, etc. It just seems to me that wages ought to coincide with net profits, but there should be no guaranteed minimum or maximum wage. Too frequently, I must admit that management does not pay labor its fair share.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

#### DECLARING CUSTOMS AND INS INSPECTORS LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the work of the officers and inspectors of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service and the U.S. Customs Service and other Federal agents and various agencies and ask that they be accorded the full Federal law enforcement status, as outlined in legislation I recently introduced.

This bill will finally grant the same status to the U.S. INS and Customs inspectors as to all other Federal law enforcement officers and fire fighters. It is in the public's interest to end the unfair, unsafe, and expensive practice of excluding these inspectors from the law enforcement category.

Because of the current lopsided law, INS and Customs lose vigorous, trained professionals to other law enforcement agencies. The agencies also lose millions of dollars, as they have to train other inspectors to take the place of those who have just departed.

Customs and Immigration inspectors are law enforcement officers. They are law enforcement officers. They carry firearms and are the country's first line of defense against terrorism and smuggling of drugs at our borders.

I represent the City of San Diego at the border crossing between Mexico and the United States; and right there in my district, 125,000 people per day, 125,000 people per day cross through the point of entry. It is the busiest border crossing in the world. And inspectors there daily face felons. They disarm people who are carrying sawed-off shotguns, switch-blade knives, and handguns. They have been run over by cars and have had shoot-outs with drug smugglers.

Forty-three courageous U.S. Customs and Immigration and Naturalization Service inspectors have been killed in the line of duty. We owe it to their memory, and to the men and women who now serve in the same dangerous jobs that their predecessors died performing, to provide inspectors with the full law enforcement status.

The sad irony in this fight is that the inspectors who were killed in the line of duty eventually achieved law enforcement status when they died by having their names inscribed in the granite of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial here in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Speaker, I say this is too long to wait and way too high of a price to pay for law enforcement status for the Customs Service and Immigration and Naturalization Service inspectors. We have the opportunity to provide inspectors parity and recognition now, while they live and protect us from terrorists, drug dealers, and fugitives.

Mr. Speaker, the U.S. Immigration and Customs inspectors daily put their lives on the line. It is time that we value those lives. I urge support of H.R. 1228, legislation to correct the unequal treatment of these Federal law enforcement officers.

#### SANCTIONS REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, this Chamber has been dominated with discussion over the course of this week dealing with the limitations and the costs of the use of force in trying to secure international peace. Yet, there is another very critical area.

As we attempt to work our will on issues around the globe, we are finding